Tapes: 013, 014

Interview with Marion Clawson

Conducted Hans Stuart and Jim Muhn

March 3, 1988

***Disclaimer**: The Bureau of Land Management Library does not verify the accuracy of the accounts by participants in the Oral History Project. Individual stories are voluntarily submitted and are placed in the Library's permanent collection. These histories are the personal recollections and perspectives of participating individuals and are not intended as a substitute for an official record of the federal government. Transcripts have not been edited and may contain errors.*

INTERVIEW WITH MARION CLAWSON

[Conducted on March 3, 1988, by Hans Stuart and Jim Muhn]

Beginning of interview not transcribed.

STUART: This is something else I wanted to give to you. This is from your book ... your latest book, and what I did is I excerpted it, from that chapter on BLM.

CLAWSON: Well, I thought that was the place to begin, because I ...

STUART: It was a good place.

CLAWSON: I wrote that ... I write everything with some care, and I wrote that with some care, including that chapter, and I don't say ... I can amplify that, but the bulk of it

STUART: It was a wonderful chapter. I really enjoyed it, and it was very personal, and we're looking for that.

CLAWSON: Well, you see, I did write that one thing when I first joined RFF, called Reminiscences of the Bureau of Land Management, that period in the agricultural history. But I had all ... that was the only thing I had done and I ...about my experience with the Bureau and I had repeatedly refused to give oral interviews because I felt that I couldn't give an honest account of what happened without delving into personalities. And the personnel, the people were alive, and it wasn't ... I didn't want to offend them. I didn't want to quarrel with them, or anything so ... I'm a coward, and by the time this book came out, they were all dead. Chapman is dead, Doty is dead, Havell is dead, and so on, all the way down, see? So that, and I don't think any of their ... I mean Havell's son was ... I don't know whether his son is still alive, but his son was an MD. here in Washington. Chapman had a son who would be forty or more now. Haven't any idea whether he's alive or where he is, or anything. I don't think any of them would care, and I tried to write it

without malice. I hope it comes through that way, but I tried to write it ... you couldn't

STUART: It painted a very good picture to me of, you came in with a mandate for change and it's very difficult with the personalities and the way it was set up. Mr. Senzel was saying, confirming a lot of what you were saying about the way GLO was set up.

CLAWSON: See one other thing that I didn't say in this book, and I might have said. My existence was a constant reproach to Oscar Chapman and to Dale Doty because the things I was doing, and was getting praised for, and we were doing fine things, they should have done earlier. And they didn't, and as I say, my existence was a constant reproach to them, but they never put it in those terms, and neither did I, but I'm just damn sure that that permeated our relationship, very ...

STUART: And Senzel said that he thought Havell was expecting to be the next Director.

CLAWSON: He probably was. I forgot whether I said it, sometimes forget what I said where, but after I, well, called Havell in and told him what we were going to do. Told him it had been cleared with the Secretary and his Undersecretary, Chapman, and I think he was stunned, because a few days earlier, he'd said, well, you don't seem anywhere as radical as Wilson, for instance, had been. Well, I was much more so, but hadn't shown, so he probably went to Chapman and Chapman confirmed it, and Havell next morning said, Oh, I prefer to retire with the title Assistant Director, rather than {****to be (? at 116)****} Well then, and actually it was less than a month before he did retire, but before he left, he got a little bitter and he said, 'Well, if I weren't so old, I'd stay and fight this. There's going to be a new Republican elected President this fall, and I'll ... I can survive under a new Secretary and so, but I'm getting too old for that sort of thing.' And so, he left, but as I say, a little bitter at the end. Oh, he was a remarkable person, but well,

STUART: You said he'd been there, I think, since 1899, began his career.

CLAWSON: Yes, yes.

STUART: It's incredible.

CLAWSON: Yeah, well, 49, he had come in at probably 18 or 19 years old, and had worked through, he had 49 years of service in 1948 when he {****retired, and he knew the work thoroughly. He knew (? at 130)**} discuss in there some. He was cunning, and I would say vicious administrator in many ways. He had these cute little tricks of ... He'd tell you what a wonder guy you were, never mentioning him. But in terms that made you feel superior to him, then he'd talk to you the same way, and the two of you, unless you were good friends and worked together, you would be split apart, and both have your allegiance to him. Anyway, and yet you never have criticized him for that, because he was telling the employee what he had ... I mean, it was a very cute and, as I say, vicious system, really. And well he was ... But I felt that ... why, you've read the book and you know what I was talking. I simply ... I felt ... either I could displace Havell and then from him Ryan, and from them on down several others, or else I couldn't. And if I couldn't, might as well find it out and get the hell out of there, and as it turned out, I could and I did. We went on from there.

STUART: One thing I'd like to ask you to do is this. I excerpted this. It would be an editor's note, which we haven't finalized yet. But if you would read that in the next week or so and let me know if you would accept that as a good collection of excerpts. Please do.

CLAWSON: Read it and ...

STUART: There's only one thing I request to add. In your book, you didn't talk too much about the ... what kind of resource management programs you wanted to establish. And I'm inferring and, I think, the political climate and the demise of the Grazing Service, the deflection of the Grazing Service. You

probably didn't have a budget for any support to establish the kind of resource programs that BLM developed later on. But if you could address a little {****bit, I kind of left it (? at 161)**}

CLAWSON: I'll do my best. It may not be very ... To be perfectly honest with you, we didn't think it through very carefully, at that time. Because, two things, we were so busy running the machine as it was, and the other was, we felt that innovation would fail. We did do some things. We did get started on range reseeding in a major way. Now the Grazing Service had done range reseeding from the beginning with the old CCC, and so on. But we got using that Halogeton mixture, and it was more than an excuse for using the publicity over that, we got a whopping sum, and whopping for the times, $2 million dollars, or something of the sort. To begin range reseeding on a fairly large scale, and the Bureau carried that on and reseeded, as you well know, how much ...3 million acres, something of the sort, I don't know, I guess ...

STUART: Right, we've got that. This is a wonderful speech that you gave in New York City, that we found in the Department of Interior Library. It was to the Conservation Round Table, I think.

CLAWSON: Yeah, ...

STUART: Talked about a four-point program ...

CLAWSON: I'll have to read ...

STUART: in Range.

CLAWSON: Can I?

STUART: Yes, you can have that. I've marked areas that

CLAWSON: I don't know that I ever saw this. I tried ...

STUART: You were talking about, well, range management, range reseeding, erosion control,

CLAWSON: We were doing ... trying ... doing some

STUART: And you were trying to establish that, and I ...

CLAWSON: We were doing some of those things, but I must say, we didn't, for instance, we didn't have any programs on recreation. We didn't have any. We had a, Sam Dodd, was our budget examiner in Bureau of the Budget, and he said, 'Don't you ever come in here asking any money for recreation.' He said, 'I'll whack it out just as sure as anything.' Now, actually the '37 O&C Act has got a clearer statement about the role of the agency in recreation than the Forest Service ever had. Or least ever had up 'til then. But that was the attitude we ran into, and ...

MUHN: Why was he against recreation? Just because of budgetary reasons?

CLAWSON: Oh, he had a personality ... the ... I tried to keep at home, a complete file of everything that ever had any public distribution that has my name on it. Now ... it now runs two full bookcases, and I have a listing of it, and it now runs 800 items or something of the sort. Now I hasten to say, some of them, my involvement was very low, if some of my colleagues write a book and, in the acknowledgement, they acknowledge me, I put that in. Some of the books for which I'm credited, I can't imagine what I did to help them. But there are others where, by God, I spent as much time on that book as I did on some of my own, see. So, it ... but I don't recall this. I don't recall this. I remember giving it ...

STUART: I'll have to ...

CLAWSON: Women's clubs, I know I

STUART: I have a whole collection of speeches from the library. That's just one of them. I can bring you copies of a few more.

CLAWSON: That's very interesting. I may ... it may be, it may be. Oh, I know what I did do with that. Hang on. Ah, yes, here it is, and it's bound in Volume 11, so I had a lot of this stuff bound up, so I've got a copy of it.

STUART: That's great.

CLAWSON: No, I keep this. Well, for a number of reasons. It's my photograph album, in a sense, but even now and then, somebody says, 'well, you said something or other.' Well, now let's just look it up. And look it up and see what I did say. Cause there've been a few times, I don't recall any of the instances when I felt that they had flagrantly, deliberately misquoted, but there have been instances in which you mis ... taken out of context, or something of the sort, and then ... well, so I've got that one.

STUART: That's good. The one thing that you had addressed, the personnel issues and the problems, and the decentralization, is very excellent, and the only question I had left after I did that excerpting was, you know, what kind of initiatives, in terms of management and, you know, we've been getting ...

CLAWSON: There's two or three pages where I do talk about that a little bit, in the book.

STUART: This speech helped me in that you had a proposal for range management, and reseeding and the erosion.

CLAWSON: Yes, we were doing some things like that. Yes, early on, even before I left San Francisco, I remember saying to some of the old Grazing Service men that I had known before. I said, 'you guys think that you, that ranges have improved under your management, oh yes.' I said, 'what's your evidence?' 'Well,' and I said, 'your voice falls away, because you haven't got any

evidence. You ... you ... I think you're right. I think you're right, but this is a judgment or feeling on your part, but what's the evidence?' So, we set out then to apply range management and the whole concept of range condition to these lands, and it took us a year and a half or something to decide on how to do it, because most of the range survey work and range condition up to that time had been for grasslands and were ... the Bureau's lands were predominantly scrub. And with some grass, but a lot of scrub. And how do you measure trends and conditions under those conditions on those? Well, I might say that it's still pretty damn error prone, judgmental process, and you say, 'ah, this range is better than it was' and he says, 'like hell it is, look at it, how bad it is.' And of course, what many of the conservationists today don't take into account is that it may be in somewhat less than perfect condition, but is the trend upward or downward? This is the critical thing, and of course, many of them misunderstand condition, because condition is only percentage of its potential under that, those ecological conditions. And I said, 'look, the salt flats of western Utah are 100% excellent condition, they don't have anything on them, they never did have anything on them. They haven't deteriorated, well, but there are less extreme cases than that. There's some areas in western Nevada that I know that, to the best of my knowledge, never were grazed, have never been grazed at all. There's no water on them, and they've never been grazed, and they never had any game animals to speak of on them. And if there ... it's pretty hard for me to believe that they're not in about as good condition as they've been for the last 1500 years. Now, they look like hell, but, but, well ... I will read this then. Where will I send you the comments?

STUART: Oh, I ... Let me give you my card and then write my address a little bit more clearly on the back here, and feel free to call. I mean, I can call you back on a toll-free line.

CLAWSON: Well, now, you have my home phone. I say, I come to the office regularly, once or twice a week, but I'm home every day.

MUHN: Okay.

CLAWSON: And I ... that book ... the sagebrush book. I wrote that all at home. All at home. The biggest accomplishment in that, I typed it for ... for ... into camera condition. Before I started writing, I bought a computer and, took me six months to learn to use the computer to the point where I'd get anything really satisfactory out of it. For one thing, the printer was set wrong, and instructions about how to set the printer were wrong. Had a hell of a time finding that out. My youngest son has a Ph D. in Economics, and this day and age, they learn about computers, and he didn't help me more than anything else, but I wrote it at home. And then after I figured out how to publish it, why the publisher gave me the specifications, and I transformed it from long line unjustified, long page into that.

STUART: It's beautiful.

CLAWSON: Well, there are about a dozen typos in it, that crept by, in spite of everything, you know, but I ... it gave me something to do, you see.

STUART: You know, that's how we're going to do this book. We're going to do it on our word processor, it's a little Macintosh desktop computer, and then, it's hooked up to a laser printer, and it's got this software for page layout and design, and we will not have it typeset. It'll go from our laser printer, right to the publisher.

CLAWSON: I've got a good daisywheel printer that's photographic process. My printer does a better job than the printers here at RFF, and it ... my printer's got something wrong with it, and I can't figure out what it is. You start it up, and the first line, and sometimes the second line are either blank or half blank. The keys are hitting but the ribbon isn't there. And then it runs on, and once it gets started, it's fine, so what I simply do now, I set it to give me two copies, and I run the first copy, and I let it run the first page of the second copy, and then I cut it off. So, the first page of the second copy becomes the first page, you see. But and I said, any error that I can detect, when reading it, I can correct. The trouble is, the ones that I don't ... that are there, I didn't detect, and so I ... it was ....

STUART: I'd like very much to mention to Mr. Burford, our present Director, that you've been using a word processor, and you did that on your book, because one of the Bureau's major initiatives now is to automate all our land and mineral records, and get these little work terminals on everybody's desk and he just did a video tape talking to all employees. It's from when he started the briefing {****to all the .. (? at 354)****}

CLAWSON: I was on one of those, you remember, one of those

STUART: I think you were ...

CLAWSON: {****(? at 358)****} Yes, I was on the second of the monthly newsletters ...

STUART: Oh, very good.

CLAWSON: {****(? at 359)****} Didn't say anything ...

STUART: I haven't seen them all, but that's good.

CLAWSON: Well, times have changed. When I went into the Bureau of Land Management, when I left it, all the time I was there, there was no Xerox. Now you just ... just no Xerox. What we did have ... you either typed things and poor girl hit the key as hard as she could hit and make as many carbons as she could, and they were dreadful to read, and always on thin paper and so on. Or you mimeographed and so on. What we did buy, while I was there, some machines, I forgot what they were called, they were, for the day, quite expensive, $1500 or something like that. And they would cut a mimeograph stencil from anything. It was a photoelectric needle and it ... drum and it revolved, and it cut it, incidentally, vertically so that you had the whole page cut, and it could take, I remember we made quite a thing of it, the field man could come in with these notes, and he sketches and his ... what I was interested in was legal descriptions. You know, to many typists, the southwest corner of the northwest corner is no different than the northwest corner of the southwest corner. Well, it is, of course, and,

you know, the errors that could creep in in legal descriptions, even with the most careful ones, and yet there they are. So that, well, that would make us a ... that was a way of making, very slow, oh God, it took several minutes to run a page, but it was a way of going from a one page to a stencil, and then you had to run that on a mimeograph machine. But the whole busi ... and what we did have Telex, between the regional offices and Washington. I don't think we had anything to any of the district offices. Course we had telephone, we could use the telephone, but mail, and course, I recount in there how we used to mail out that weekly newsletter and to ... which was, I thought then and I still think, was a hell of a smart deal, and well, there's things today that are just, you know, the B ... As I learned to use the computer, I thought so much of my father, and the men of his generation, who grew up ... my father, with horses, and he was past forty years old before he ever drove an automobile. And all the men of his generation, the same thing, learning to drive, they knew, among other things, they knew ... understood gravity and centrifugal force. They didn't know those words, but they understood these things, and inertia and momentum and all that sort of stuff. But to go from horse drawn to ... well, all right, I went from typewriter to ...

STUART: That's right.

CLAWSON: to computer, see, and I did ... I thought so many times of these guys.

STUART: Shall we start with our official questions?

MUHN: Yeah, I guess.

STUART: We thought of some ideas.

MUHN: This has answered one of our questions. One, did you have papers and so on and so forth. What ... I guess one thing I'd like to ... is it ... would it be possible for you to get us a Xerox of your publications that you have in here from '48 to '53 when you were Director? Just photocopy that?

CLAWSON: Oh, it would be difficult.

MUHN: I mean, not ... just of the index.

CLAWSON: Oh, you mean of the index.

MUHN: Just of this index.

CLAWSON: Well, the index wouldn't, of course, be so difficult, pick up those pages and index them.

MUHN: Yeah, cause then we can track down all the other ...

CLAWSON: the ... You know, I don't know how much of a job it would be, this was a loose-leaf deal, and that. One of the things that's ... well, for instance, had I not had this, I would have added it, but I would have added it in the wrong place, and it was wrong number, they're numbered consecutively. Here and there, for instance, there ... well there's page 22a, just by turning it. Here's a whole string of a's, that have been added, see, and I don't know whether any of those would be ... well ...

STUART: I have the feeling the Interior Department Library and Archives may not have all of that material. I don't know.

MUHN: Well, I don't think we can use it for what we're writing right now, but ...

CLAWSON: I wouldn't think ...

MUHN: for later. Cause I noticed you had references to various hearings that you were in, and that would be of ...

CLAWSON: {****Yes(? at 451)****}

MUHN: of interest for

CLAWSON: Well, it could start here. There's ...

MUHN: {****Probably covers about (? at 455)****}

CLAWSON: There's one that probably that begins it, 13 and would run ... would run at least through 23 ... 10, 12 pages, that's no trick

MUHN: Would appreciate it. The other question sort of goes along with this, if, you know, like I said, we would really appreciate that. Do you ... you obviously have a lot of papers. One thing, this is sort of a beginning of what I'm hoping will be a larger history project over time. Do you have any plans to give your personal papers to ... like here, or Forest History, or ...

CLAWSON: Forest History.

MUHN: Forest History Society.

CLAWSON: Pete Steen was up ... Harold K. Steen, who's Pete to everybody, Pete was up in Washington last September some time. Came out and had dinner with us, and I showed him the collection of mine and he said, 'now, look, what am I going to do with this? I don't think any of my kids what to take it over and in any event, it's sitting there idle and so on.' He said, 'oh, yes, Forest History would like it very much, so I ... for other things, my wife and I have already did our wills last fall, and one of the things I put into it, and explained too, she knows and her son and my son, who are the executors of ... know that, at my death, even when she's still alive, he has no interest in set ... I've all ... well, so that's my plans for that. I've no idea, well, I have the books, and the major papers, and then things like this, I have. For a while, I had them bound into volumes, as I said, that's Volume 11, or whatever I said it was.

Well, there ... every time I had them bound, the bookbinder ... different bookbinders ... they all screamed, because they were different sizes, and all kinds of things. The resulting volumes look like hell, if you want ... but they're tied in. They're tied in. And you don't give the last one away, and you don't lose it and you can loan it ... the volumes to somebody and nobody that I've loaned it to yet has had the guts to run away with the volume. But he might have run away with the paper, you know. Well, so I did ... and it got to be a little expensive, $10, $12 a volume, because of ... partly because of this very awkward sizes. So, the last 20 years, I haven't had them bound, I've just got the stuff in the series of folders. One in each year. I've tried to keep the whole thing, essentially chronological, and so on. But that's what's planned. In a way, it would be logical to put them here, but the plain truth of the matter, is that Resources for the future has never really had, doesn't have yet, a decent library. The library has been a stepchild here from the beginning. Now there was some reason for it. When we used to be over in the Brookings Building, we had access to the Brookings Library, which was a pretty good general library, and through Brookings Library, we had access to every government library in town, including the Library of Congress. Well, this means that you kept in your own library, we kept two things. Things that were given us. And things that we were using pretty regular, and ... but I had a feeling that this was just no ... if my collection has any value, this wasn't the place to put it, so I put it with Forest History.

MUHN: {****Okay. Good. Well, let's start off (? at 536).**}** You know, we've read your memoirs, but we just want to cover some ground, maybe get a little bit more information, and ... you came into the Bureau of Land Management, soon after it was created. You came in as a Regional Director.

CLAWSON: Regional Administrator.

MUHN: Regional Administrator. Two questions on that. One is, what at that time did a Regional Administrator do in the Bureau. From your memoirs, not apparently, very much. In other words, you were delegated very little authority, and well, let's go with that, and then I'll go with the next question.

CLAWSON: Well, no. After the Bureau was established, at some point, early on, Joe Wilson was the Associate Director, and he had ... of the Land Office and he had the idea of decentralizing a lot of the work of the Land Office. Grazing Service was pretty well decentralized then, and ... but he felt he needed some sort of supervision and ... this ... going to have regional offices and so on. Joe was a delightful and lovable person, but he was not a very hard driving executive. He let himself be sabotaged by Havell, and just nothing happened. And then Wilson left shortly. He went into Jewish relief work and came back to the Department as an Assistant Secretary under Chapman. So, oh yes, we did some things. We set up ... set up regional accounts, I mean, and reach personnel actions, and we did land classification work, or least reports on which land classifications were made. And there was some work, and some work with the grazing districts and so on. But I joined the Bureau in ... at the beginning in 1947, and that fall ... by fall, I figured it was a losing deal, and I was quietly casting around to get out. Well, I ... that's when I wrote my book on the range livestock industry, which had been my dissertation, and I would go to the office ... living ... I was living ... the office was in San Francisco, and I was living in San Francisco. I'd go down to the office in the morning, and usually before lunch, I would go home, and that's ... take leave. I had a lot of accumulated leave which Bureau ... BLM ... accepted when they took me on, and I'd go home and work on that book, and oh, I wouldn't say there ... but we ... they certainly weren't a dynamic nature role.

MUHN: What ... what specially made you feel that BLM was going down the tubes, I guess, at that point in time?

CLAWSON: Well, ... you see, the only one I, as I think I said in the book, the only one in the whole Land Office crowd was Wolfson. And he had left, and I ... the Grazing Service people I knew, quite well, but they were not in effective positions, by and large, and as I got acquainted with it, and you know, Fred Johnson was, as I said, a sweet old man, but he was totally ineffective. And I began to see something of what Havell was doing, and Havell, I will say, conscientiously, he believed in it strongly. He thought you couldn't decentralize work, you had to keep it. He gave me a fatherly lecture one day after lunch, before I marched him off the end of the plank. And said, every one of these applications for use of the public land has got a potential scandal in it. He said, 'I've been through the coal

cases,' and he talked on and all of this, and he said, every one. Well, he was right, but then he went on to say, 'the only way you can protect the Bureau is that you {****personally should look at every one of them. (? at 636)****} It was ... the flow, as I described it, the flow of paper was enormous. You couldn't look at them, really, and if you ... the more you tried, the less you could do anything. But he believed in it. He believed in it strongly, and he was ... you know ...

STUART: He'd remember the '20s, was it Fall?

CLAWSON: Yes, well, and he said the Cunningham coal cases and the Bellinger Pinchot business had been even worse, and there was no doubt in my mind, I didn't quote this in here, but no doubt in my mind, that Fall took bribes, more than was ever revealed, one old Land Office guy told me in San Francisco, he had been after a timber trespasser in Oregon, and they got to be, you know, enemies, but they knew each other pretty thoroughly, and Leo said, I wired him and told him to meet me at Trade. He said, I knew he would, and he got there, and I said, Bill, or whatever his name was, I got you this time. And the guy said, Leo, what would you say if I had it patent to that man. Leo says, impossible. And I said, here it is and pulled it out. How the hell did you get it? Well, he said, it cost me thousand dollars, but it's got the Secretary's signature on it. And ... and now, I have no reason to think that it wasn't true, I mean, and things ... as Havell said, these scandals just pull the guts out of an organization. For months the morale is low, and it's just dreadful, and you've got to watch. You just got to watch it all, every bit of it. See? And this was his ... his ... and he was high-minded and in one sense, he was dedicated to the work.

STUART: At least we've got a reason why he felt that way, I guess.

CLAWSON: Yeah. And, well, but I thought that it ... we weren't going to ... I didn't know what ... As I say, wasn't much for a Regional Administrator, it wasn't really significant things for a Regional Administrator to do, and I thought it wasn't going to get any better. We had tried to ... I had sent the one guy, won't say who it was, who they offered the job, as Director, and

he didn't take it. Now everybody ... this was toward the end of Truman's administration ... everybody thought Truman was going to be defeated, and there'd be a whole new crowd in, and of course, the history of the Land Office, then that every there's a new President, there was a new Director, a new Commissioner of the Land Office, and well, so that it wasn't a period of great enthusiasm. I took it because I said I felt the chances were better if I were there doing something than if I were sitting waiting for things to happen.

MUHN: Well, one person, sort of made the observation to us, that they thought that actually you had been ... someone had brought you in, placed you where they did, cause they were trying to train you because they already had their eye on you for the Directorship.

CLAWSON: No, I think ... Well, if so, I was unaware of it and I don't know who would have done it. I got the job, the only person that ... whom I worked to get the job was Wilson. Now later, I got to know ... I mean the Regional Administrator job. Later I got to know Davidson, the Assistant Secretary very well, and he was pushing me for ... for Director. But he had, to the best of my knowledge, never heard of me, or had no knowledge of me for the Regional Administrator job. I ... it was good training, it was good experience, and I ... afterward, I looked back and thought, gee, I could have used that time much more effectively than I did. I could have ... but I didn't and ... but I don't think there was ... whoever ... I don't think there was any such careful planning at the Department of the Interior at that time.

MUHN: Okay. Well, that takes care of that.

STUART: I wonder if you could kind of briefly go over some of your background before you came into BLM and how that helped you.

CLAWSON: Again, it's in the book, but, well, I was raised there in Nevada and went to the public schools, went to the University of Nevada, graduated in 1926 with a general course in

Agriculture. In those days, that was as far specialized as one got.

END OF SIDE 1 OF TAPE 1

SIDE 1 OF TAPE 2

CLAWSON: I ... I really in the central valley studies, and I got to know the Interior equally pretty well as a result of the number of people in the Interior. Bill Warren, who was ... and so on. So, and I got a Ph D. from Harvard along the way. And a nice thing to have, a Ph D. from Harvard.

MUHN: Was that in ...?

CLAWSON: In economics.

MUHN: You want to ask a question?

STUART: Sure, I was going to ask it later, but I'll go ahead and turn {****(? at 007)****}

CLAWSON: Based it on some courses I'd taken there. Based upon one summer school at Berkeley, and I had a Master's. Now it was a thin a Master's as one could imagine. And then I had here had a course in statistics. The Department of Agriculture had a Graduate School, and its statistics work was superb, and I'd had that. And in those days when you went to Harvard, Harvard had a very simple lot of requirements. For the Ph D., you had to have two full years of full-time graduate studies, one of which should be at Harvard. Now actually, ... well, I'll have to come back to that. You had ... but you had to pass the language exams, you had to write a dissertation, you had to pass the general exam, you had to pass the exam on your ... and most everybody took three and four years. But I knew some people, Walter Wilcox, Dennis Fitzgerald from the Department of Agriculture, and they had managed to get the Ph D. on the basis of one year at Harvard. Well, as I think I suggested in the book, my father was getting old, he wasn't well, I could see

problems coming up there. Second year at Harvard would have been wonderful, but I simply couldn't swing it, so I got the degree on the basis of ... now I had to do a lot of work, I had ... didn't have the languages, I had to get those off ... course it was strictly a make work thing, they were useless, but ... and the dissertation was another ... that took a lot of time.

STUART: Oh, yeah.

CLAWSON: And so, I ... well ... but it's ... say what you wish, Harvard's the leading institution, and a Ph D. is a good degree to have, and it certainly, for instance, when I came to come here, and I had ... even before I left BLM, I've had them since here, offers at universities. Well, they wouldn't ... most universities would have been much less willing to take me on if I hadn't had the Ph D. So, I had a very respectable career before I ever joined BLM.

MUHN: Going back to BLM, you became Director. We know about that story. Going to kind of skip around on my questions, here a little bit, but one of the things that I see in early things that you're writing as Director, that come out is this concept of multiple resource management. Now I guess, what I kind of looking at is, where ... what was the definition then, per say, I've never seen a real ... really good definition of it? Udall, when he became Secretary, said, throw out multiple resource management, and you'll get ten different answers from ten different people.

CLAWSON: You still do.

MUHN: Yeah, but, you know, what was your image, if you can think back, of what it was, and where did it come from. Was this

CLAWSON: Forest Service

MUHN: Wasn't it a concept that was already in the Bureau, you undoubtedly brought it.

CLAWSON: Forest Service

MUHN: Yeah. Okay.

CLAWSON: National Forest Service. I had been an Agricultural Economist, of course, all those years. And one year, for instance, and I'd been active in the Western Agriculture Economist Group, in those days, it was called Farm Economists, but anyway. And one year, at one of our meetings, the regional forester from Missoula, Evan Kelly, came and gave quite a speech on quality use and management of national forests and their problems, so. I got to know Kelly very well later on, but ... and ... he wasn't a great mind, I might ... he was a hell of a good administrator, but he wasn't a great intellect, but he talked about what the practical problems of resolving conflicting uses and the enormous demands that were on the national forests. Well, a lot of that applied to the lands outside ... public lands outside the national forests. There were a lot of things that we did, that were either intentionally and deliberately, or perhaps unconsciously imitating the Forest Service. There were a lot of things where we rejected the Forest Service. One of the most ... two ... personnel things. One is that they moved their men, ordinarily two years in one spot was ... and then they moved them. We said that's just too short, he ... there were times when we did move people because we thought they were in a rut, and we thought they were good people, but they were in a rut, and they needed the challenge of a new spot, but we also felt that many times, the guy would just ... should be just hitting his stride at two years, and we didn't ... The other thing was that the Forest Service at that time, recruited only at the bottom. I mean, a guy started out timber cruiser, and then a ranger, and then he came up. I said I wanted for about 80, 90% of the vacancies, I wanted to do the same thing. For every level, I wanted to bring in a little fresh new blood, and of course, if you read the record, we did bring in some new Regional Administrators, for instance, and {****brought in new people at different levels (? at 84)**} I ... We had some problems as a result of it, but it was, I thought it was smart then, and I still think it was smart. But the idea of it, see, and if you look at ... and incidentally, I think I was always cognizant of the situation on the land, and don't ... Most of these lands did have more than one use, more than one user group was interested in them. Now they didn't

begin to have the recreational values or uses that they have today, but there was some hunting and other recreation activities. Mining and mineral leasing, and grazing, and on some places, timber. Of course, we were interested in the erosion control, conservation, and so on. So, there were ... as I say, so obvious, you'd go out and look ...

STUART: Right.

MUHN: What were, with all these multiple resources out there, when you came in, what to you were the big issues? Not in terms of organization of the office, or anything, but I mean in terms of the resources out there? What seemed to be the real big problem?

CLAWSON: The big ones were grazing.

MUHN: Right. Okay.

CLAWSON: On largest area of land. Next biggest was oil and gas leasing. Terms, now we're talking about areas. One of the big value ones and controversial ones was the O&C. Those were ... sure, there were lots of others, there were lots of other things, ... occupancy matters, and trespass matters and all sorts of things, but those were certainly the three big, big ones.

MUHN: I guess now we'll kind of skip to ... you have all these resources, you had oil and gas industry, grazing, mineral, all wanting something from you. They undoubtedly have a lot of power, but you go to those ... the various advisory boards. Did you feel there was a real problem with that?

CLAWSON: Well,

MUHN: In terms of trying to carry out your job.

CLAWSON: The first book I published was on western range livestock history and I pointed out in there that the ranching industry of the West had always had a very substantial amount of political power. Now, I have ... book that was published in '48 that was truer then than it is today, because first of all, ranchers and miners were the first permanent settlement of those areas, but ranchers, miners tended to be a drift in, drift out crowd, and ranchers stayed and even in the ... up into the '30s, '40s and later, a lot of ranchers were in important positions, a lot of people in important positions had ranching backgrounds, and so on. And I say in that book, that ranching industry was more important politically than economically. Now it ... showed where advisory boards and they were criticized then, and they've been criticized since. A lot of it was beside the point, if you hadn't had the Board ... Advisory Board, you'd have still had the same political pressures, and political powers, and actually, formalizing it into an advisory board, I think, made it more responsible, really. For one thing, you'd sit around the Board and some guy blew off some steam, somebody on the board might straighten him out, see, and now I had ... enjoyed on the whole, there were exceptions, but on the whole, we enjoyed very good working relations with these ranchers. And one of the first things, early on, within three months after I became Director, I had the National Advisory Counselor in here, and I would never ... well, they thought the reason, the issue had been settled, and one of them said, may we assume that that is settled, finally? And I said, no. Jesus, ... I said, now just look, an act has been passed, and it talks about how to divide the money, and you set a fee based on a certain organization and one thing, another, but I said, there's no certainty whatsoever that Congress, some parts of Congress, will honor that bargain, appropriations fees, in particular. There's no certainty that a lot of people on the outside won't move, or something else. And I said, look ... this was in spring of '48 ... I said, you ... this is all off the record incidentally, you damn Republicans think you're going to elect a President this fall, and he's going to come in with a new Secretary of the Interior, and you don't know what's going to happen. Well, that was the kind of direct, blunt talk to them, which they had been so ... never had had from ... and Oscar Chapman wasn't present, or we wouldn't have had. And that was the way that they liked it. Later on, I remember one time we had a meeting of the same group out in Salt Lake, and we said, we feel that tensions or pressures are rising for increased fees. Before they blow up, let's quietly look at the situation as to what we might suggest, and we proposed to make some studies, and well, they talked around, and I thought they were opposed to the whole thing. I

remember very well. Went for lunch, and came back, and they said, well, ... I said, just to be blunt about it, I'm disappointed that you opposed this, and John Hay was the Chief then. We're not opposed to you making those statements, I said, for Christ's sake, John, what have we been arguing about all morning? He said, we don't want to endorse it. We think it's fine if you go ahead and do it, but we aren't going to endorse it. This study. Well, all right, this was the way that we could talk bluntly back and forth to ... and they appreciated that kind of ... No, I wouldn't ... there were ... It wasn't true in every instance, but by and large, we had good relationships. Better, I should say, than we had ... there were poorer organizations on the mineral leasing side. It was the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association. We certainly didn't have as good working relations with them. I don't think they represented the industry as well as the grazing boys. They always were elected boards, and I was disturbed that some of the {****elections (? at 195)**} 20% of the eligible are, and I expressed this to someone, and he said, you just wait, you just wait. Let there be a difference of opinion, a controversy. Well, next one, there was, and some old-timers got voted out, to their horror and embarrassment and so on. And what it did mean was that our advisory boards represented the users. And the Forest Service had advisory boards, which they had appointed, and didn't consult very much, and they had no ... this wasn't a challenge. No, I would agree with some of the critics that in some instances, the boards assumed authority that they didn't have. But that was our fault, if we let them do it. And I ... well, I welcomed the boards, and I welcomed meeting with them, and we used to have some rare times when we met with

STUART: That ties our public participation that was so big in the '70s and today, all the way back to Ferry Carpenter, in the '30s, there's a tie there.

CLAWSON: Incidentally, Ferry Carpenter was a character, and he was a showman and a ... well, in a way that I never was, and he was ... I went, at his invitation, to the first meeting, statewide meeting they had, in Rock Springs, to organize districts in Wyoming. I had called on him in his office, and I was still with BAE at that time, called him in his office in Hayden, Colorado, and he told me just {****what was going to happen, and it did. He (? at 222)**} it just fully, but he started a meeting that was in the moving picture theater, was the only place in town big enough to hold it, and somebody came

and said, Harry, you got a long-distance call from Washington. Harry said, tell them I'm in Wyoming now. Well, you know that brought ... He was ... he was a showman, through and through, but he consulted, and he said, he didn't know how, and nobody else did, and where in the world you would have gotten the information, ... where you gave credit as they did, to prior use. Who knew? Not the government, certainly.

MUHN: Yeah, true.

CLAWSON: {****Well, I'm talking (? at 237)****}

MUHN: What we're look for.

STUART: looking for stories.

MUHN: On these groups, ... recreation, I read your book on the federal lands that you wrote in the mid-50s, whenever. And you noted then that there really wasn't much interest in the public lands. Public lands meaning the BLM administered lands, not Forest Service. From what I gathered from that book, and some other things you said, there doesn't appear to have been any outside pressure for BLM to look at recreational opportunities that hard?

CLAWSON: That's pretty well true. The ... John Baker ... that's a very common name ... there have been lots of John Bakers, but this John Baker was head of the Audubon Society at the time, and I remember, I got to know John quite ... fairly well, in fact, when you drug out that paper, I thought it was one I had given at one of their meetings, or had been to one of their meetings and he had ... he personally, and to some extent, the Audubon Society, had some interest in the public lands. I remember I rather naively said, well, John, we really don't have much to do with birds, and so ... Look, we're interested in lots more than birds. But now we did have ... there was this whole business, the California condor, and oil and gas leases down there in Santa Barbara country, and so on. But most ... but he ... then there was some interest, but it was, I would say, a general conservation interest, and not

STUART: When was this that you met with him?

CLAWSON: Oh, this would have been in my office here in Washington, some time in those five years, I don't know. He came in. Now they were hunting ... deer hunting and pheasant and other sage hens, and those people had interest, but there wasn't a hell of a lot. And you know, I said repeatedly, that in those days, if we had talked about the Mohave Desert as recreation area, two guys in white coats would have led you away and fastened you up before you did any harm. The whole idea of the Mohave Desert as a recreation area was unthinkable ... utterly unthinkable, and there was beginning to be the small tract movement out ... Twenty nine Palms, and out that way, among those valleys, but out into the ... but you know, there were no ... virtually, there were, well ... there were still ... there were Jeeps by that time, but they were not off the road vehicles, these dune buggies, and all this sort of stuff. And the whole ... these ... well ... Long after I left the program, I was here and Russ Petty came and talked to me about when he was first beginning to try and develop plans for that Mohave Desert country, and I said, God Almighty, who's going to use it, Russ? He said, thousands of them do, and they churn it up and they leave their junk, and ... Well, all right. Then ... but that was ...that was ... didn't exist, it was unknown, unthought of. If anybody had proposed it, it would have been rejected. I remember one of my own C boys said, do you realize we've got 160 acres of O&C within 10 miles, I think it was, of Portland, that fronts down on the river. I said, My gosh, wonderful opportunity. He said, don’t say a word. We don't have any money, we don't have any facilities, we don't have any manpower, we don't want it known, because it would ... unless we have something to take care of it, it would ... I went up ... I keep spinning stories here, but

MUHN: No, this, this is good.

CLAWSON: I went up to Alaska the summer of '49, and I had driven a government car up and I camped out and so on. Well, there was nobody in the Department of the Interior that I ... certainly not in the Bureau of Land Management, that had ever been on the Alaska Highway. They never had seen what the Canadians were doing with it, and that's ... and I said, we had highway problems, keeping people back away from the road, and ... But anyway, I camped out, saw a campground, a lovely BLM

campground. Next day in Anchorage, I said, you guys built that campground? Yeah. Yeah, I said, I loved it. What money did you use for it? What do you mean? I said, you have absolutely no authority to have spent a dime for that purpose. They said, we think it's a good area, and ought to be preserved. I said, so do I, but you have no legal authority to have spent any money. And I said, I'll have you convicted and sent off to jail. Well, course, I didn't, we didn't. Nobody ever made a public issue of it, and we didn't either. I didn't either, of course. But this was, I mean, there was an interest in such things. There was a few places the Grazing Service had with CCC labor ... had built either a ... some kind of a park or something, but very little, very little, and most of those were not maintained and ...

MUHN: As long as you've taken us up north, I got a book at the library back in Interior with one of your papers on a conference you attended in Alaska in the '50s. I guess one thing

CLAWSON: Back where?

MUHN: In the 1950s, about Alaska. I guess you and a bunch of other people.

CLAWSON: We had ... that was here. That conference was here. Oh yes. We had that special.

MUHN: What ... as you were Director, what ... in terms of ... what were your thoughts on Alaska. I mean, what direction did you want to take Alaska? What did you see as the big issues there? Problems?

CLAWSON: Well, you have to back up a little bit. Ickes had made a great thing of Alaska. There was one of these Sunday supplement newspapers, Parade, or some of them, had had a big article in it on Alaska. Pointed to it and he said ... this was at the end of the war, and it said, "Veterans, here's your free land, and future, and so on. Well, ... at that time there were plenty of skeptics, and most of us in the Bureau were skeptics,

and yet, there was some real possibility of agricultural development in some parts of Alaska. And we withdrew certain areas from homesteading until they could be ... the homesteaders would go in and take a tract of land and if you build a cabin on it, that counted as improvements and if you had had two years' service in the Army, that would be your ... you got the homestead for virtually nothing. And there were no state taxes on it, and you could just sit and hold that land, and actually, in a lot of areas, it needed development because ... and I held a public hearing in Anchorage when I was there about those. So, agriculture was one possibility. There was some, there was a good deal of interest in possibility of timber, the birch that's up through there. We thought there was some possibilities of that. But ... and we had a constant stream of homestead or other applicants for land, and land titles, and various things. We had a ... oh, I don't know ... I'd have to ... I don't suppose we have more than 30 or 40 employees in Alaska, and that's a damn big country. And our programs were at a very low level, and we didn't ...well ...

STUART: Were there any proposal to do anything with Alaska? I just want to close out Alaska with ... did anybody in the Department want to do something in terms of ...

CLAWSON: Well, Dale Warren, the Assistant Secretary, had gotten quite interested in Alaska, and whereas, the Assistant Secretary to whom we reported, was Davidson. When it came to Alaska matters, it was Moore and Warren was ... I got to know him, still know him very well and we got along very well, and ... It was only reluctantly that we gave up the idea that there wasn't going to be agriculture {****there the (?)**} colony had been founded and was farming and so on, but ...

STUART: There was a vast area that was unsurveyed.

CLAWSON: Mostly.

STUART: Federal, public domain?

CLAWSON: Yes.

STUART: Almost empty.

CLAWSON: Well, of course, there were National Forest in the south, and they ... McKinley National Forest, and ... but the Dean ranges, and all that sort of stuff had been established long ...

STUART: Since then

CLAWSON: They weren't ...they didn't need to be established.

STUART: I got a question I want to ask at some point. Skipping around chronologically, it had to do with you and McCarren. How you got along with McCarren, because he is credited with the demise of the Grazing Service, and you know, the people go punished. He wanted to raise the grazing fees from 5 cents to 15 cents, and so that's a reality you had to live with.

CLAWSON: Oh yes. Damn right.

STUART: You know, you say in your book, you're from Nevada, and that certainly helped.

CLAWSON: That certainly helped. That certainly helped. There were a lot of other things. McCarren was a very emotional man personally and I'll tell you in a few minutes, why I think the story wasn't quite as clear black and white as it's often pictured. But I used to go out, I used to go and see, I used to go and see all kinds of members of Congress, including McCarren. And I remembered so well, once he called me Ray. Now who was Ray? Ray Clawson was my uncle, and then ... he knew I wasn't Ray, he immediately corrected himself. But then he went on to tell me, he said, in all these years as a lawyer, defense lawyer, and he was a jury lawyer, he was ... McCarren had a silver tongue ... it was just ... he, he could stir you and it was ... you might not remember, but ... he said, in all of his

years as a trial lawyer, he had never had a witness as competent as Ray Clawson. And it's a long story behind that, and ... So, he ... he was intensely Nevadan, intensely Nevadan. The fact that I came from Nevada, now I was very cautious about raising issues with McCarren, but I think I stood my ground with him. I think he respected you for it. We had some people in the Bureau to whom he had taken personal dislikes. Ryan was one of them. Discussed one day how he got Ryan. But {**Mollohan**} was our Regional Administrator in Billings, and he was just as violent about **Mollohan** and I said, for me, he's been competent and trustworthy, and I believe, loyal employee. And I'm not going to demote him or discharge him. Well, he ... "you got to watch him, you got to watch him", this is one of the appropriation hearings, I think. And there were cases, there were situations, a lot of amusing situations

END OF SIDE 2 of CLAWSON INTERVIEW

SIDE 3 OF CLAWSON INTERVIEW

CLAWSON: ... an Interior Grazing Act, land classification provisions, and we had said, what suit? and handed down decisions, application denied. On the last line it says, this is without prejudice, should he file application on the Small Tract Act. Well, the old guy read it, and it said application denied. Well, then later on, somebody else filed for the same tract of land, and got it. And he wrote a letter to this fellow, to McCarren, on ruled tablet paper, and said, 'Dear Pat, there's something crooked going on ... and they denied me, and they gave it to him. I'll bet he paid for it, and so on.' Well, I ... I told them, I said, I don't know, but I'll find out. Well, it ... what they had meant was, the General Land Office legalism, you see, application denied. At the bottom, it says, without prejudice, and he should refile under a different law.

STUART: And it told him what to do.

CLAWSON: Yeah, but he didn't understand it that way. And the girl who worked in McCarren's office had been in my class at the University. She said, if you had gotten something that said application denied, you'd ... Well, all right, this was ... that was the sort of thing ... that case, for instance, McCarren

talked to me before he blasted it, see. And I called up our District Ranger, and I said, Woody, go round and find this guy, go round and talk to him, and see if you can't help him find a location that he'd be satisfied with. And we did. I mean, it was a different attitude, you know. But McCarren started out his investigations of the Grazing Service on a strictly fishing expedition basis. But he did find things, there were a lot of things that the Grazing Service, with {**Dignes's**} encouragement and Rutledge's direction was setting out to make itself a rival of the Forest Service. And the men that were in the Grazing Service had told me about, Rutledge would haul them in in the morning, and say, there was a story in the paper this morning about Forest Service; there's no story about the Grazing Service. Now, the guy that McCarren hired to conduct that work was Will Stark, and Will Stark was a boyhood friend of my father's, and so I knew him. Stark had been an alcoholic and he had reformed and was on the wagon, and so. Either they assigned Archie Ryan to him, or Ryan took it on himself to travel with him, and to keep Stark drunk, and he did. And Stark died shortly, and McCarren said, Ryan killed him. Now you don't do something like that to a man of McCarren's emotional characteristics without you just ... you started a fight right now, and he was in a position to do something about it. And so that I don't ... I don't condone all the things that McCarren did, but I think that there was a lot more complicated story there than has generally been brought out. Incidentally, Jerry O'Callaghan tells me that in the report there's some place, a reference to the fact that Stark had been ... had died on the job or something. And I told this story to Jerry, and he said, if you know it, there's a sufficient reference in the report to verify it. I know it's true. I'm sure it's true. Cause I say, my family knew Stark. I mean, that's ... these are some of the ... you know, you can't ... like I said, you can't get away with these personalities. And McCarren was ... now, there were two guys that worked in McCarren's office whose names were almost the same. One was McDonald, with a D on the end, the other was {***McDonall***}, and they called one ... and they were both first names, were both Joe. So, it was Big Joe and Little Joe. Little Joe calls me up and said there's a man here ... I forgotten what his name was, and he's come to the Senator with a story about malfeasance in the handling of Angel Island, because it had been declared surplus property there in the bay, in the San Francisco Bay. Can you talk to him? I said, sure, I'll talk to anybody that's interested, so he came ... this guy came down, and he was rabid, and he was emotional, and he was right nasty to me. After he left, I called up Little Joe, and I said, Joe, is that guy an old friend of the Senator's? He said, never

saw him until he came in this morning. I said, Can I treat the SOB like he deserves? He said, go ahead. Well, all right, that's the sort of ... you know ... that ... when you have that sort of relationship, you know what you can do then, and so on. Oh, McCarren was a difficult person. Very emot ... very highly emotional person, and a man of great personal loyalties. He ... the woman that was in charge of the Land Office at Carson City, Rose Day, her qualifications for the job ... her mother and Pat McCarren's mother had been girlhood chums. And now, I will say, in her case, she may not have been the ablest employee, but she was loyal. She tried hard. She was anxious to do a good job, and she was fine. But that was the sort of thing that McCarren ...

STUART: That's right.

CLAWSON: Course that had been a political appointment, as ... after all, the Post Office, the Postmasters were political appointments in those ...

STUART: Sure.

CLAWSON: That period, and it was ... no, I never ... I had some tense moments, but I got along with McCarren, and the fact that he identified me with Ray, and he volunteered it, I didn't ... it certainly didn't hurt. It certainly didn't hurt. Incidentally, Ray died last September at age 96, but ... well.

STUART: Maybe it's time that we should summarize some of, you know, your accomplishments in terms of the administrative things you did, like you closed a lot of Land Offices. Did you introduce a new organization structure to the Bureau? Like new kinds of offices anywhere?

CLAWSON: Well, it was there before, but we strengthened it greatly.

STUART: And what was that again? Could you just run ...

CLAWSON: Well, what we had was a Washington Office. We had Regional Offices, which were really, later became ... they were mostly two states. And mostly two states, Montana and Wyoming. What attached to them were the Dakotas, which there were, there was virtually nothing. There was Utah and Colorado. There was New Mexico and Arizona. There was California and Nevada. There was one in Portland with Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Damn little in Washington. Was one in Alaska. We had Regional Offices and then we had different kinds of District Offices. We had Grazing Offices, in the O&C area, Forestry Offices, and of course, Land Offices, where the records were. Now some of the ... many of the Land Offices were in the same city, the same building as the Regional Office. I mean, the Billings, Montana office was in the Billings Office, and so on. What we ... I suppose the biggest thing I did was to change the attitudes. From one of like ... instead of applications denied, what did the guy want, how do we help him to get it? And I remember, at one point, we instituted a new filing system for correspondence, and our administrative man, Falk, had me meet with all the women and file clerks and so on. And I said, now look, this stuff comes to you as a piece of paper, and I said, just be blunt about it, much of it's not very damned important, but some of it is. Some of it is, and behind every piece of paper, there's a person. You don't ever meet him, or rarely ever meet him, but there's a person out there. Live, breathing person to whom this means something. And behind every piece of paper, there's a tract of land out there. Real sure enough land. You don't see that, but they know it. Now I said, when that paper comes, think of it as a representative of the person and of the land, and not just as a piece of paper. Well, I don't know how much ... how many converts I made, but they made a lot, and we made a ... well, the first year when we had efficiency rating time, we brought efficiency ratings all around the place, and there was a lot of criticism and so on. And we had a session with them, and a lawyer ... there wasn't a union, but there was sort of informal ... and one of our lawyers was sort of often as spokesman, and Joe said, well, we just got to recognize we've got a new Director, and we're running a tighter ship then we ever ran before. This was the ... we tried to ... well, we inherited a whopping backlog of oil and gas applications, and a backlog of ***(???)** all sorts of ... we ... all that sort of stuff we ... wouldn't say we did it perfectly, but we moved it enormously better, now and I insisted that we weren't going to be any more generous. If you want to say no, say no, but don't take 6 months to say no when you can say it today. And we ran a ...what we did on the grazing ... we slowly moved to range and

adjudication, and we moved into the reseeding and so on. And we did perk up our salvation activities and so on. So that it ...was that case because I was not ... I was not a professional administrator, but that's really what I became.

MUHN: With your reorganization and your Regional Off ... well, one of the things that I noticed when I was reading things, you came up with a concept called, area administration.

CLAWSON: Yeah.

MUHN: Now, I guess, tell me if I'm correct. Your idea with area administration was to take ... I'm not sure exactly how large the area you were thinking of, but you wanted to have basically all the specialties available for the administration of the resources.

CLAWSON: Much of the area administration stuff came after I left. We tried to put everything into the District Office, which was basically a grazing district, and some things we did, like some of our land classification work was done out of the Regional Office because there wasn't enough volume to keep a man in the District Office. But when he went to the district, the first thing he did was go talk to District Range Manager. And so that we tried to make the District Range Manager really in a sense a resource manager, but the area administration stuff, where they split the districts into areas of administration resource areas, that all came later, I didn't do any of that.

MUHN: Okay. How important did you feel land classification was? For what the Bureau was trying to do?

CLAWSON: Very. The withdrawals had taken it all out. I mean, if somebody wanted a piece of land, the first thing he had to do was get a reclassification or a classification. And if ... no I think one part of the Taylor Grazing Act, it's underestimated and importance was the classification authority that it gave, and if somebody wanted a small 5-acre tract or he wanted a homestead or they wanted a site for various or any purpose for anything, they had to have a classification, except in Alaska.

It didn't apply to Alaska at that time. And sure, yeah, it was highly important.

MUHN: Okay. We've got to go on. You tell us when you're tired. We're almost done.

STUART: I think we're almost ...

CLAWSON: I'm not sure what the hell you're going to do with all this stuff.

STUART: Some of this is helping us in the ... you know, we're doing, reading a lot of source material and, you know, giving the historical versions, but we need to hear the way it was.

CLAWSON: Let me tell you a story.

MUHN: You're kind of bringing this together for us.

CLAWSON: Let me tell you a story that has nothing to do with the Bureau of Land Management. But it ... indirectly ... around 1970, well 1969, my brother organized a family reunion and I think this was about the third one. We had it in Nevada; at that time there were still some of our relatives, well, there's still some relatives, had one {****there last summer, out south of Elko at Lemoy, over (???)**} But in '69, when one of my uncles, who's since dead, talked some about family history and I said to my oldest son, that's a lot of crap. {****It just ... it's ... most of it can't be true (???)**} Somebody ought to put that down in understandable form. He said, who's the writer in this family? He said, you go write it, and he said, you've got an obligation. So, with some help from my brother, I have just one brother, we wrote a family history which, which is not ... well, we made 100 copies of it and we've never ... there is a copy in the northwest ... northeastern Nevada museum in Elko, and I think there's one in the State Historical Museum in Reno, but we never distributed it outside the family, and ... But in connection with it, my brother had been a ... is a ... or was a Presbyterian minister and he had been at a church in Reno, and he retired from that and moved up to Carson City. And in connection with the history, he went into the state health

records, vital statistics in Carson City to ascertain if one of our uncles had had a child or hadn't had a child. And while he was there, he looked up his ... my record, this is the point of the story, we had died at birth. Now there's the record, you go and look at the record. It may have been changed. He said, look. Incidentally, that's the very area where Mark Twain said, the rumors of my death are grossly exaggerated. And the explanation ... we think the explanation is that our births were recorded in the county records in Elko, and at some point, copied by hand, because that was the only way you could do it in those days, to the state records and there's a column of date of birth and a column of date of death, and whoever did it, they had perhaps had a little astigmatism, they got in the wrong column. But that's ...

STUART: How long did ...

CLAWSON: But this ... I tell this story over and over again, because it illustrates the fact that written records are not infallible, by a hell of a lot, and sometimes ... course sometimes, they're deliberately falsified and ... but in any event, they are not. And of course, what you never know as a researcher is, did I get all the story?

STUART: That's right.

CLAWSON: Did I get all the story? This is a ... well ...

STUART: And, you see, in one answer to your question, we've drafted an article for you, that will fit into two pages, saying what your ... the issues you faced and your accomplishments are. And that's wonderful reading, I really liked that, and the only thing we're asking you to do is to write a couple of paragraphs in terms of possibly the resource management, the range and other resource matters, cause that was mostly administrative, I think.

CLAWSON: Well, it was.

STUART: It's great reading, but that's what it was, that's what it focused on. That's right. But I want to mention, that's the one thing we're asking is a little bit on ... or we could draft something for you.

CLAWSON: We certainly did ... we tried to develop ways of measuring progress on the range, ways of ... well, improving the range and so on. Now I ... you see, the Nicholson, Rex Nicholson's report was one. And they set up a schedule of administration, and they classified the districts into three categories, and the first-class districts were to have three men. A District like the District 1 in Nevada, which is Elko County and some adjacent areas, bigger than the States of New Hampshire and Vermont combined, and one man to ... three men in that District and you ranged on down, a Class 2 District had two men and the Class 3 District had 1 man, and that was what Rex thought was a suitable level of administration. It was better than the Grazing Service had ever had, and ... but the ranchers were prepared to pay for that and did. And so, ... well ... when you ... you had to move slowly with that kind of a man. There were a lot of very, awfully competent guys, awfully competent guys in those, but you know, there was damn few of them, too.

STUART: I don't want you to feel in any way that this is a criticism, because it's not.

CLAWSON: No.

STUART: I think the reason we're asking it, is that, you know, the BLM of today has, has such established range program, forestry, soil, air, water, and they're only the beginnings ...

CLAWSON: Let me tell you another ...

STUART: You know you can trace them, ...

CLAWSON: Stories.

STUART: You know.

CLAWSON: We had a ... was a guy, I guess he was employed by the Park Service, named Nussbaum, and he was one of our violent critics because we were not protecting the archeological sites of the ... and all this sort of stuff, especially he was ... think he was stationed in Albuquerque, and he was interested in that, Four Corners country and all that. Well, we just said, look, we think the sites should be protected, but we haven't got any manpower to do it. We can't do a thing about it. Today you've got archeologists, and all kinds of people, and ... we never had a thing like that. Now whether ... well, I ... whether the ... I was successful in getting two major breakthroughs on appropriations. One for grazing administration, grazing reseeding, range reseeding, and one for road building in the O&C areas. Those were the accomplishments. Whether ... I don't know what we could have done, or I don't know what we might have done, had I stayed, you know.

STUART: I think it terms of like, you know, a legacy, you helped solidify an organization, a new organization that as yet had not really had a mandate, that came FLPMA, later. Eventually, with all this other legislation, that helped to solidify and establish an organization that survived and prospered and grew into what we have.

CLAWSON: Well ...

STUART: I guess that's what I'm ...

CLAWSON: One of the guys that left the Bureau here in Washington, cause he thought we didn't appreciate him properly, and went over to be Dale Doty's assistant was Bob Coot, and the day ... last day I was on the job, Bob came down, and he said, well, I couldn't let you go without coming to talk to you. He said, you and I have had our differences, but he said, whatever anybody said, you made a Bureau out of it. And I think that's the ... was ... we made something ... that winter of '49, no, '48, '49, was ... I tell in there about the snow removal and all that other stuff. Well, that's ... in those days, the Salt Lake

City Chamber of Commerce had a guy, Gus Backman, Executive Secretary, and Backman was anti New Deal, but he was pro federal agency. He knew the federal agency people, and he knew how much the ... and every spring, he used to come in here to Washington, and go around and talk to members of Congress, supporting appropriations and so on. And then he always had a big dinner, invited the top ... the members of Congress and the top administrators that year. I was embarrassed, they were ... it was so full of praise for what we had done, on the snow removal, it was really embarrassing. What made me angry at Gus, was he wouldn't let me speak. I wanted to say, look, it wasn't me that did it. It was those guys out there on the bulldozers that did it. Well, we won a tremendous ... incidentally, spent a million dollars for which we had no legal authority whatsoever. We didn't even have the money; we borrowed a million dollars from the Bureau of Reclamation. We had a directive from the President of the United States to do it, and I don't think he had any legal authority. But, well all right, we had ... but, but, and I remember so well, Davidson, the Assistant Secretary was there, and he said, for heaven's sakes, go someplace and hear praise heaped on the Bureau of Land Management. Well, all right, we did things. We did it. But in a ... really in an administrative way, we didn't have a great immediate crusade, and we didn't have a great ... now, there is a book, I can't tell you the author or the title, published by the Sierra Club that deals with the Bureau. And I was asked to review it, and when I started looking at it, I refused to, because when he talks about the Bureau, he talks about me, and he said, this was a tragic failure, my administration. But what he meant, from his point of view, I suppose it was, he said, he didn't build a cliche of ... conservation supporters. Well, I didn't.

MUHN: Oh, I know what you're talking about. Elmo Richardson's book on 'Eisenhower and Conservation, Parks, Dams, and something else'. Dams, Parks, ... yeah.

CLAWSON: And, well, but I just felt that, first of all, I wasn't going to re ... but I don't think that was the general appraisal of my administration. Fascinating and interesting episode in my life. And it was only an episode, you see, I was never emotionally committed to the Bureau of Land Management as Tom Havell was, or as the typical Forest Service man was to the Forest Service and so on. It was ... I was ... I liked it and I enjoyed it, and I had, on the whole, very friendly relations with my staff, Washington, the field, and so on. And as I say,

but ... and it was traumatic when I left. I ... you know what the record is, I ... I didn't resign, I was fired, and of course, I've said repeatedly, one of the great ... lucky I saved the book, one of the great lucky things that happened to me in my life was that I was fired, because I think that the eight years of the Eisenhower administration was one in ... which certainly did not encourage innovation and changes and so on. Now I say it again, I say, this book, I think Woosley did a good job, especially under the circumstances, I think he did a great job.

MUHN: You mentioned your resignation. I have a couple of questions, because I've read a number of different books, and your resignation comes up. Do you want to talk about some of this?

CLAWSON: ***(???)** cause I didn't resign.

MUHN: Yes, I know. Okay. Of course, when McKay and his people came in, they felt that you did not fit the philosophy that sort of, what became known to them as sort of partnership conservation was kind of how they, their theme. You were apparently charged with insubordination. My understanding is the insubordination was that you did not take a job that you were told to take, and to give up your ...

CLAWSON: Well, the insubordination was that McKay had announced I had resigned and I ... when newspaper people called, I said, no, I had not resigned, I had no intention to resign. That's what the insubordination was.

MUHN: Oh.

CLAWSON: {****It wasn't ... it wasn't that I was (???)**}. He said, find yourself another spot in the Department someplace, if you need a job, but I was the Administrator. I don't, incidentally, there's a young man who's a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, and he's over here at Brookings. Now he wants to come talk to me, and he's making a study of transitions, and so on, and he wanted to talk to me about this

very episode. I ... I think it was a straight out {***political spoils (???)**}. I never discussed ... I had some meetings with McKay, we never talked about policy, or programs. It ... he simply wanted his ... and I remember at that time, one of the Congressmen from Idaho was Hamer Budge, and I talked to Budge, and Budge said, well, yes, Woosley was coming in, and he'd been their man, and so on, he said, you talk about a rancher who had lived there and had moved away who wanted to be considered as Director. And he said, you know, we wouldn't have considered that adequate political reward to have appointed this guy. And I mean, it was ... you have to recognize, you see, that the Land Office had always political in its ranks ...

END OF TAPE